

Listing of Claims

29. (currently amended) A method for automated staining of specimen slides supported in a slide tray, the method comprising

~~providing a slide tray holding at least one specimen slide and an associated accompanying reagent pack for the slide, the reagent pack with reagents for staining the slide and containing first and second identifiers for a staining protocol,~~

providing a reagent pack supportable in the slide tray and comprising reagents for staining the specimen slide, a first identifier and a second identifier, said first identifier and said second identifier identifying a staining protocol,

removing said first identifier from said reagent pack,

providing applying said first identifier to [[said]] a specimen slide,

reading said first identifier on said specimen slide and said second identifier on said reagent pack, and

verifying the staining protocol from the in response to reading said first identifier[[s]] and said second identifier.

30. (currently amended) The method of claim 29 further comprising:

initiating the staining protocol in response to said first identifier being the same as said second identifier, and when identifiers are verified or

not initiating the staining protocol when identifiers are said first identifier is not verified with said second identifier.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 29 further comprising scheduling staining protocols for a plurality of specimen slides.

32. (currently amended) The method of claim 29 wherein further comprising placing the reagent pack provided is in said slide tray adjacent said specimen slide.

Application Serial No. 09/483,248
Amendment Dated October 13, 2003
Reply to Office Action dated August 6, 2003

33. (currently amended) The method of claim 29 wherein the first and second identifiers ~~contain~~ comprise the same information.

34. (currently amended) The method of claim 29 wherein the reagent pack ~~provided~~ comprises a set of wells for reagents for a staining protocol.

35. (currently amended) A method for automated staining of specimen slides comprising:

providing an apparatus comprising

at least one slide tray holding ~~at least one~~ a first specimen slide and an associated accompanying specific reagent pack having reagents for processing said first specimen slide and identifiers for a staining protocol,

an automatic staining head assembly operatively associated with said slide tray, said staining head assembly reading said identifiers, for obtaining said reagents from said reagent pack and depositing said reagents on said first specimen slide ~~and for reading said identifiers~~,

a control system controlling said staining head assembly ~~for staining slides~~, and

[[an]] a first input operative to cause said control system to pause said ~~apparatus~~ staining head assembly during processing, and

[[an]] a second input operative to cause said control system to restart said apparatus staining head assembly after pausing,

adding ~~at least~~ a second specimen slide to said apparatus during a processing of said staining protocol for said first specimen slide, and

initiating said control system to cause said staining head assembly to initiate processing of a staining protocol for said second specimen slide.

36. (currently amended) The method of claim 35 ~~wherein~~ further comprising initiating said first input prior to adding said second specimen slide comprises initiating said pause input.

Application Serial No. 09/483,248
Amendment Dated October 13, 2003
Reply to Office Action dated August 6, 2003

37. (currently amended) The method of claim 35 wherein said identifiers comprise a barcode and said method further comprises initiating a staining protocol in response to assembly initiates staining by reading said barcode with said staining head assembly.

38. (currently amended) The method of claim 35 wherein said second specimen slide requires initiating a staining protocol therefor prior to completion of a staining protocol for said first specimen slide and the method further comprises initiating said second high-staining priority and said restart input to start initiates an autocontrol program initiating a staining protocol for said second specimen slide prior to the completion of said staining protocol for said first specimen slide to provide high priority for staining said second slide.